

Ahl al-Bayt (as) in Holy Qura'n

Mahmmood Sadeghi Tajar ¹
Mohammad Mehdi Pirooz Mofrad ²

(Received: November 21, 2023, Accepted: December 13, 2023)

Abstract

Debate on Ahl al-Bayt (as) or the household of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is probably the most discussed, and yet, the most misunderstood issue among the Muslims, since the demise of Holy Prophet, some 1400 plus years ago. In this research work, we intend to find out, first of all, who are Ahl al-Bayt mentioned in Holy Qura'n, and what responsibilities do the Muslims have, with regards them, according to Holy Qura'n, as it has been commanded by Allah(s.w.t.) in His Holy Book. We shall also try to find the answers from Holy Qura'n, regarding some questions on the subject of Ahl al-Bayt (as), which has been going on for so long, without being solved or answered beyond those sectarian affiliations.

Key words: Ahl al-Bayt (as), Holy Qura'n, Household, Islam, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims

1. Lecturer, Al-Mustafa International University, Former Lecturer, University of the Philippines, mahmoodtajar@gmail.com
2. Librarian, Al-Mustafa International University, mpirooz@gmail.com

Introduction

This research work intends to explain the "position of Ahl al-Bayt" of Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the Holy Qur'an, which 90% of the Muslims (the Sunni Muslims) who follow the "Caliphate" (not the Imamate) have not realized/ recognized fully/ despite the passage of 1,400 years of the history of Islam. In this research, we have chosen Holy Qura'n as the "source", to avoid any doubts (unlike in the Hadith) about the facts presented in this research work.

The Importance of the Study

According to Holy Qura'n, the concept of Ahl al-Bayt is the essential part of the *risālah* or the Prophethood in the "Abrahamic Religions" and even going back up to the time of Prophet Adam (as) and Noah (as) down to Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the last of the Abrahamic Religions -i.e. Islam.

Who Are Ahl al-Bayt (as)

Before anything else, it's very important to know who really the 'Ahl al-Bayt' in the terminology of Holy Qura'n are, and then to understand what is their respectful position in the Eyes of Allah (s.w.t.) as well Holy Prophet (pbuh)?

It's because of those misunderstandings about them that the Muslim *Ummah* has been divided into 73 sects, or more (sub-sects) that Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "All are wrong, except one group" (Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidī/ Hadith on the Muslim Sects)

What Does Ahl al-Bayt mean?

The term Ahl al-Bayt in Arabic language, refers to the "household of a man" (Zannawi, 2023), but, when it comes to Ahl al-Bayt in Holy Qura'n, it refers to the "Blessed Descendants" of Holy Prophets, like Prophet Abraham and Holy Prophet Muhammad (Holy Qura'n, ch.11/v.73 or ch.33/v.33). But, it is not only being the member/s of that family, rather there are two more specifications also, which are as follows:

- 1) They must be blood related, too.
- 2) They must also be believers in the mission of the Prophets (as)

For example, when the son of the Prophet Noah (as) misbehaved, and did not want to accept the Faith, Holy Qura'n says that Allah (s.w.t) told Prophet Noah: "He is not from your 'Ahl'! (Holy Qura'n·ch.11/v.46)

Regarding the unbelieving wife of the Prophet Noah and Lot (as) both of them were condemned by Allah in Holy Qura'n, by declaring: "Both of those (unbelieving wives of those two Prophets) were told Enter ye in the hellfire!" (Holy Qura'n, ch.66/v.10). So, based on these clear Qur'anic verses, the conditions for being included in 'Ahl al-Bayt' aside from being in that house (household) is also:

- 1) To be Blood related with the Prophet
- 2) To be a believer, too.

Ahl al-Bayt in Holy Qura'n

To better understand the Ahl al-Bayt, of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) we better look at them in Light of Holy Qura'n. A very interesting example is the event of the *Mubāhalah*, which was the spiritual confrontation between Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Christian heads of church; Holy Qura'n, delivers the Message of Allah (s.w.t.) to Holy Prophet, this way:

"And say (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) to those who disputed with you (the Church fathers):"Come, let's bring our sons, and your sons, our women, and your women, and ourselves and your selves, and to ask Allah, to punish the liars!" (Holy Qura'n, ch.3/v.61)

According to all Muslims, in that 'Spiritual fight' the household of Holy Prophet (his woman folk, and his sons, and his 'selves' were only these five personalities:

1) Holy Prophet, 2) Imam Ali, 3) The Prophet's only begotten daughter from Lady Khadijah (as) namely, 'Fatimah Zahra' 4) Imam Hassan and 5) Imam Huseyn (who are also known as the 'Pure Five')

Another very well-known verse, in Holy Qura'n, which refers directly to Ahl al-Bayt of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) talks about the duties and responsibilities of the Muslims towards Ahl al-Bayt; In that verse Allah (s.w.t.) orders His Beloved Prophet this way:



"Tell them (the Muslims) I ask nothing from you, for what I have done (delivering the message of Islam to you) except (I ask you to) love the nearest/relatives/descendants/ (Holy Qura'n·ch.42/v.23)

The interesting part is that, another Qura'nic verse explains this verse by stating that: "What I asked from you is for your (spiritual) benefit"(your Islamic faith needs this act, in order to be right) (Holy Qura'n, ch.34/v.47).

Examples of *Ahl* in Abrahamic Faith

Considering the fact that, according to Holy Qura'n, the true religion, from the time of Adam(as) down to his descendants Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other honorable Prophets of Allah (s.w.t) has 'always been Islam ', it will serve us here to see how Holy Qura'n explains the 'Ahl al-Bayt' with regards to them, too.

Holy Qura'n, talking about the 'Ahl al-Bayt' of the great Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) says:

"This is the Blessing, and the Mercy that Allah has blessed you with 'O' Ahl al-Bayt"(Holy Qura'n, ch.11/v.73)

And to perfect this blessing, Allah (s.w.t) has obliged all the Muslims that in every Wajib Daily Prayer to Him, they must also include the Holy Families of "Muhammad and Aale Muhammad, just as He had blessed Ibrahim and Aale Ibrahim, in the World"

Look at this part of the Daily Salaat (Salawat Ibrahimiyya, in tashhod) very carefully:

"Allahumma Salle alā Muhammadin, wa Āl-e Muhammad, kama Sallaita 'alā Ibrahim, wa 'alā Ibrahim, fil 'Ālamīn; InnaKa Hamīdun Majīd"(O' Allah! Bless Thee Muhammad and his Descendants, as Thou has blessed Ibrahim and his Descendants, in the world.)

According to Imam Shafe,iy of the Sunni Islam, anyone who does not include this prayer, in his Daily *Ṣalāt* to Allah, "Has not performed any prayer at all!"

(Note: The Arabic version of Imam Shafe-iy's statement, in the form of his own famous verse is such:



*Yā 'Ahla Bayt' Rasulul Lāh, hubb- komu
Fardum minal Lāh, fil Qur'an, anzalahu
Kafā- kumu min azimish Shan, anna-kumu
Man lā yusalli alay-kum lā Salāta la-hu!*

(Translation: "O' Ahl Bayt of Prophet!

Loving you, is a Duty,
As is commanded by Allah,
In His Glorious Qura'n.
So much so that, if anyone,
Does not pray for you, even
Though he may pray, to Allah,

Has not had a prayer, at all! (Imam Shafe'iy /Diwan)

Now, considering that even the Daily Prayers are called 'Qur'an' by Allah, in Holy Qura'n(see: ch.17/v.78) itself, then you may realize that how relevant this is to the title of this research which is: "The Holy Ahl al-Bayt(as) in Holy Qura'n"

Two Questions Answered

In order to clarify farther, and to answer some misunderstanding and interpretations that has pestered for long, and has misled many Muslims, for millennia, here are some more points to explain:

- 1) Some ignorant people say that: The term 'Aale Muhammad means 'his followers' not necessarily his Descendants
- 2) Some others object that how could you include anybody's name, in your prayers to Allah? Isn't it a 'Shirk' as the Whhabis preach?

Well, our answer to the first misunderstanding is that: How come 'Āl-e Ibrahim' means his Family/ Descendants/ but for 'Āl-e Muhammad' in the same prayer, and in the same line, suddenly it becomes ' his followers!'(Some years ago, a booklet about *Ṣalāt* printed in Singapore, had translated the *tashahhud*, as: "O' Allah! Bless thee Muhammad, and his 'followers', as You blessed Ibrahim, and his Descendants!)

Now, to understand that 'Aal' is not 'follower' here, we should realize that a "Prophet like 'Isá/Jesus to the Christians/ has many 'followers' and some 12 Disciples/Hawaari/ but no Muslim says /Āl-e 'Isá/ but the other Prophets like Ibrahim, Mūsá, Y'aqūb, Ishāq etc. Are called 'Āl-e Ibrāhīm, 'Āl-e 'Imrān, 'Āl-e Y'aqūb, in Holy Qura'n, but never



Āl-e 'Isá because Prophet 'Isá had no children/descendants/ although he had followers! With regards to the Wahhabis belief that:

"Don't bring anybody's name with Allah, or don't include anyone's name in the prayer to Allah, etc. the answer must be clear to you by now that:

Not only the Holy Names of the Holy Ahl al-Bayt are obligatory in our Daily Prayers to Allah (s.w.t.) but even the names of Holy Prophet Ibrahim as well as his *Āl*, all of them are included in the *Tashahhud* of the entire Muslims, in their Daily Prayers to Allah (s.w.t.)!

And regarding to whether bringing the name of any other person together with the Holy Name of Allah, is allowed or not, we all know that no one becomes a Muslim, unless and until he/she declares his/ her/ *Shahādah* as: '*Lā Ilāha illal Lāh and Muhammadun Rasuluh Lāh!*' (Meaning not only the faith in Allah, but also belief in His Holy Prophet/s, too!). In every Azaan/ call to prayer/ all the Muslims say: "'*Ash-hadu 'an laa ilaaha 'illal Laah 'Ash-hadu 'anna Muhammadan Rasuluh Laah!*' This declaration is repeated by all the Muslims, many times, everyday!

Another Qura'nic Mention of Ahl al-Bayt

There is a very popular, yet also very less understood, or misunderstood verse in Chapter 33 of Holy Qura'n, that states the great position of the household / Ahl al-Bayt/ of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). That verse, supported by many Hadith or the Narrations (also called Traditions) of Holy Prophet, is known to the Muslims (both Shiah and Sunni) as the "*Āyah of Taṭhīr*"(the Verse to Declare the Purity of Ahl al-Bayt).

We want to quote that important Ayah here, and we shall also try to explain it a little, for those who may not yet have read, or not understood it very well. The Ayah goes like this:

(After some advices to the wives of Holy Prophet, and even 'scolding' and then 'warning' them, in the specific feminine gender, to make it sure that the scolding is to the wives of Holy Prophet, suddenly the verse turns in to the masculine gender, which means the addressees are different, and it declare):

"Truly! Truly! Allah, only wants to keep away any impurities from you O' Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you, a Perfect Purification"! (Holy Qura'n, ch.33/ v.33)

Anybody who knows who is Allah the Almighty, should also know that, whenever Allah purifies, He purifies to Perfection, and He performs nothing less than a perfect job. While every Muslim believes that this verse is referring to Holy Prophet, and it was revealed, when only the Pure Five members of the family (those in the *Mubāhalah*, meaning:

1. Holy Prophet, 2. Imam Ali, 3. Blessed Fatimah, 4. Imam Hassan and 5. Imam Hosayn (as) were present at home with Holy Prophet, who gathered them in his own Yemeni *Kisá* (=Cassock) and said: "O' Allah, Thou Knowest that these are my 'Ahl al-Bayt'. (Hadith in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhari* and many other books of hadith) But, some people, out of ignorance, or the envy towards Ahl al-Bayt, have argued that the household means anybody inside the house, which includes the nine wives of Holy Prophet (and possibly even the domestic helpers, in the house!) But as we have already seen in several Qur'anic verses earlier, the term 'Ahl al-Bayt' of Holy Prophets first of all are blood related, and secondly, they are believers, and as this last Ayah certified: "They are Purified by Allah", and they can't be sinners, too! Otherwise the purity guarantees, by Allah (s.w.t.) in His Own Glorious Qura'n, will be meaningless!

(Note: One of the wives of the Prophet, was involved in a military rebellion against the Holy Imam Ali, the successor to Holy Prophet, and such a rebellion, is considered a 'Mortal Sin' in Islam!)

A Wife can be Divorced!

Those who claim that the title of 'Ahl al-Bayt' can be used for the wives of Holy Prophet (pbuh) forget that a wife becomes a wife by a marriage, and she can be separated by a divorce, but Ahl al-Bayt is blood related member of the Prophets, i.e., Adam, Noah, Ibrahim, Moses...as well as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them).



Conclusion

In conclusion, we must say that those Qura'nic Ayahs, indicate that Ahl al-Bayt are:

- 1) Only those who are blood related to the Prophet/s (pbuh)
- 2) More so, they must also be believers in the Missions of the Prophets (as)
- 3) Allah (s.w.t.) in Holy Qura'n, has excluded the unbelieving son of Prophet Noah, by declaring: "He is not your 'Ahl'!"
- 4) He, in Holy Qura'n, also has excluded the unbelieving wives of Prophet Noah and Prophet Lot, from the 'Ahl' and sends them to Hell! (Holy Qura'n, ch.66/v.11)
- 5) Ahl al-Bayt of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were only the 'five personalities' whom Holy Prophet included in the "*Mubāhalah*".
- 6) Holy Prophet, following the command of Allah, did not bring his own wives, or his adopted son or daughters, in the 'Spiritual confrontation' with the unbelievers.
- 7) Ahl al-Bayt of Holy Prophet are 'Purified by Allah's own Will, and no sin is possible from those whom Allah has Purified (impeccable/infallibles)
- 8) One of the wives of Holy Prophet, after the demise of the Prophet started a "rebellion against the Islamic state" which is a 'mortal sin' in Islam, and that means that she was not included in those, whom Holy Qura'n says were Purified by Allah (that woman was included among the misbehaving wives of Prophets Noah and lot.
- 9) Holy Qura'n calls the Daily Prayers as the Qura'n as well; and all the Muslims, around the world, five times a day perform the *wājib* Prayers, in the *Tashahhud* of which, they say: "O' Allah! Bless Thee, Muhammad and Āl-e Muhammad (pbuh), as Thou has blessed Ibrahim and Āl-e Ibrahim (i.e. Holy Ahl al-Bayt of the both Prophets)
- 10) The last, but not the least, all true Muslims, who follow Holy Qura'n and the true Sunnah (the way of the Prophet) must also recognize Ahl al-Bayt, too, and they must accept their leadership (not the leadership of their rivals or even their enemies, as some did!).



Bibliography

Holy Qur'ān; Darul Qura'n Publications, Qom City, Iran.

1. Abu Dawud, (n.d) *Sunan*. Cairo: Dar Ihya al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya
2. Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma'il (1315 AH), *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.
3. Fakhr al-Rāzī, Muḥammad ibn 'Umar (n.d), *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
4. Hakim al-Niyshaburi, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah (1334 AH), *Al-Mustadrak 'Alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*. Hyderabad.
5. Ḥillī, Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf (1414 AH), *Nahj al-Ḥaqq wa Kashf al-Ṣidq*. Qom: Dār al-Hijra,
6. Ibn Ḥajar, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (1425AH), *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥrraqah*. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Asrīyya.
7. Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad (1416AH), *Al-Musnad*. Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth.
8. Ibn Kathīr, Ismā'il ibn 'Umar (1416AH), *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār al-Āndulus.
9. Ibn Shahrāshūb, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad (n.d), *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyya.
10. Makarim Shirazi, Naser (n.d). *Payam-i Qur'an*.
11. Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (1955), *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. ed. Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi. Cairo.
12. *Nahjul Balāghah* (n.d), Sermons of Imam Ali, Quds Publications, Qum, Iran.
13. *Nahjul Faṣāḥat, the Sayings of Holy Prophet Muhammad* (2003), Amir Kabir Publications, Tehran, Iran.
14. Najashi, Ahmad ibn Ali (1407AH), *Rijāl*. ed. Musa Shubayri Zanjani. Qom.
15. Ṣadūq, Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh (1403AH), *Al-Khiṣāl*. ed. 'Ali Akbar Ghaffari. Qom.
16. Tabataba'i, Mohammad Hossein (1383 SH), *Shi'a dar Islam*. Qom: Daftar Intisharat Islami.
17. Tusi, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (n.d), *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an*.

